



**Statement on behalf of the OIC Group, delivered by Mr. Muneeb Ahmed, First Secretary, during the closed meeting with Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises**

**8 February 2024**

Mr. President,

The OIC Member States<sup>1</sup> recognize the salience of the Working Group of Business and Human Rights. The unanimous adoption of HRC resolutions on Business and Human Rights bear testament to the fact that we are fully supportive of the mandate of the Working Group.

Traditionally, OIC Member States have actively engaged with the Working Group during the interactive dialogues organized under HRC sessions.

While we reaffirm their commitment to uphold human rights for everyone, we would like to reiterate our firm rejection of the proposed focus of this report which constitutes a deliberate effort to normalize and promote a deeply controversial notion.

Mr. President,

The grounds of discrimination are well-codified in international human rights law, calling on state parties to honour their human rights obligations without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, or birth.

We believe that unless a new right is inter-governmentally negotiated and accepted, it cannot become a universal right. In accordance with the mandate of the Working Group, “integrating a gender perspective throughout the work of the mandate and giving special attention to persons living in vulnerable situations” should not be mis-used to promote the concept of “SOGI”, which is not supported by a large proportion of UN member states.

We wish to highlight that HRC resolution 53/3, cited by the Working Group inter alia as the basis of its report, did not mandate the Working Group to work on this topic. While we respect the independent nature of its work, the Working Group, in knowingly choosing a controversial topic, has acted against the spirit of IB package and founding resolutions of HRC. Its coverage under the proposed thematic report would mark unwarranted and inadvisable overreach of the Working Group’s mandate and we reject it.

Mr. President,

While non-binding, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights have proven successful primarily because they were adopted by consensus, and because they

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<sup>1</sup> Except Albania



referred to internationally recognized human rights expressed in the International Bill of Human Rights and the ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work<sup>2</sup>.

Introducing controversy would undercut the singularity of purpose with which the international community has worked to foster greater business respect for human rights. Therefore, we would stress upon the Working Group to give due recognition to diversity of legal traditions and sovereignty in international law. We underline that divisive concepts should not be included in the work of the Working Group as it would only further polarize the work of the Human Rights Council and negatively impact the environment for international cooperation.

Lastly, the OIC Group remains committed to combating discrimination and violence against anyone, anywhere, pursuant to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, international law, conventions, respective constitutional and legal provisions.

Thank you.

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<sup>2</sup> UNGP 12